

By: DAVID LEVINSKY

[Burlington County Times](#) - November 6, 2009

The Congressman, who visited the country, believes the United States can succeed in its mission to restore peace.

Congressman John Adler returned from a trip to Afghanistan convinced that the United States can succeed in its mission to restore peace there and in neighboring Pakistan but that it will take more troops.

"I believe that a more stable Afghanistan is possible. But additional troops are needed in the country to support our security and diplomacy," Adler, D-3rd of Cherry Hill, said Thursday during a conference call.

The freshman congressman returned Monday from Afghanistan as part of a six-member delegation that toured areas of the country, including Camp Bastion and the village of Nawa in the Helmand Province in the southwest portion of the country. The group also met with U.S. troops and civilians and received briefings from regional commanders.

Adler, who serves on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said he was encouraged by the trip, particularly to some villages that he said had been overrun with Taliban insurgents but are now secure and thriving because of the actions of U.S. and foreign coalition troops.

"Area after area are being cleared by our servicemen and coalition allies to give Afghanistan a chance for long-term sovereignty and stability," Adler said.

He said the American troops he spoke to were "honored to be serving their country and proud to be there."

Adler's trip comes ahead of what is expected to be a crucial decision by President Barack Obama in the next few weeks on whether to deploy more troops to Afghanistan.

Adler declined to specify how many troops he believes are needed, noting that the military leaders he spoke to on the trip did not give a number. He said the leaders stressed that locations where new troops were deployed over the last several months have become much more secure and that efforts to improve the economy and living conditions of the Afghan people are helping.

"We're doing the right things as far as building up the confidence of the people in us," Adler said, adding that areas in the southern part of the country are still overrun with Taliban fighters.

"The south still has some Taliban and more troops on the ground will help. It's that simple," he said